



NEWS RELEASE

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State Unveils Web Site and Info Bank to Prevent “Caregiver Burnout”

Campaign’s message - “If Someone You Love Leans on You, Lean on Us”

SALT LAKE CITY, May 5, 2005 – Utah Department of Human Services is launching a campaign to help informal caregivers identify themselves and recognize community resources that can help them.

An estimated 173,000 Utahns assist loved ones who are aging, have a chronic disease, disability or mental illness. Very few consider themselves caregivers and a large percentage do not seek outside help. Many place their loved-one’s needs before their own and suffer from “caregiver burnout.”

Subsequently, 61 percent have depression, deteriorating health and loss of income, according to the Utah Aging Initiative.

A new Web site, www.ucare.utah.gov, connects informal caregivers with support resources such as meal delivery, personal care, transportation, home healthcare and much more. The state partnered with the Community Services Council’s 2-1-1 Info Bank where caregivers statewide can talk to a live person just by dialing 2-1-1 seven days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Caregivers are usually between 40 and 50 years old. They may help around the clock or just once weekly with things like doctor visits, household chores or personal care.

“They juggle full-time jobs while caring for someone close to them, in addition to other family responsibilities,” said Utah Department of Human Services Executive Director Lisa-Michele Church. “It can be overwhelming.”

“Few people plan to do it,” Church added, “Life happens, and suddenly a parent cares for a child with a disability, a daughter supports an ailing father or a man looks after his brother who has a mental illness.”

The campaign, which includes new radio and TV ads, will feature real Utah caregivers. The ads begin airing in May and continue through September.

“We wanted to show Utahns in real care-giving situations that others can relate to,” said Donna Riley, DHS Campaign Program Manager. “Our message is, ‘if someone you love leans on you, lean on us. You are not alone. Help is closer than you think.’”

“We urge caregivers to utilize the UCARE resources,” Dr. Richard Melton, Utah Department of Health Deputy Director said. “Make time to get away from the demands of providing care, and make self-care a deliberate step. We know that prevention goes a long way in extending longevity, but quality of life along the way is very important too.”

Individuals, families, the work place and society are affected by informal caregiver concerns. A federal Real Choice Systems Change grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, funded the campaign. Utah medical, health and safety organizations, government offices and businesses will receive posters and brochures to display at facilities or to distribute. Libraries, independent living centers, senior centers, assisted living centers and nursing homes will receive campaign materials within the next few months.

For more information about the campaign call (801) 538-4608.